

This email lesson follows quickly on the last one because they are related. Some points are repeated for new readers.

Last lesson we saw that our Lord had opened the mind of the disciples ([Lk.24:45](#)) then spoke to them regarding the Kingdom of God for 40 of the 50 days between the Feasts of Unleavened bread and Weeks, Pentecost ([Acts 1:1-3](#)).

The disciples were not confused and ignorant men; they knew exactly what Pentecost was about, it concerned Israel and its coming Kingdom on the earth.

Some Christians think that the term “the Kingdom of God” really means “the church”. The dominion of the Lord Christ Jesus will extend from the heights of heaven to the earth but up until the time of the opening of the book of Acts the Lord had not revealed anything regarding the heavenly aspect of his kingdom. The heavenly aspect was given to Paul much later than this. We must not read into Acts, truths given later.

We remember that after forty days speaking by the Lord, and His command to tarry in Jerusalem until they were baptized in the Holy Spirit, the disciples had one question and one question only. And this question is asked in the light of Pentecost, the baptism of the Holy Spirit;

[Act 1:6](#) Then, indeed, these coming together, they asked Him, saying, Lord, do You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?

Tradition links this baptism of the Holy Spirit with “the church” but the educated and illuminated disciples linked it with the restored Kingdom to Israel. Which is true?

Many Christians are surprised to learn that supernatural gifts were given at the first Pentecost around Mt. Sinai and we shall look at these when we get back to the Feasts.

We must stand with the Word of God. The disciples were correct in their question and later, speaking under the inspiration of the Spirit, Peter says this;

[Act 3:17](#) And now, brothers, I know that you did it through ignorance, as also your rulers did.

[Act 3:18](#) But those things which God before had shown by the mouth of all His prophets, that Christ should suffer, He fulfilled in this manner.

[Act 3:19](#) Therefore repent and convert so that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord.

[Act 3:20](#) And He shall send Jesus Christ, who before was proclaimed to you,

[Act 3:21](#) whom Heaven truly needs to receive until the times of restoration of all things, which God has spoken by the mouth of His holy prophets since the world began.

We do not restore something by bringing in something entirely new or different. Peter refers to the times of “refreshing” or revival for Israel and the times of “restoration” which the prophets spoke about and friends the prophets spoke about the restoration of Israel not “the church”. So the question in Acts 1:6 is still in the mind of Peter in Acts 3:17-21 after the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. The Lord used a similar term in this passage;

[Mat 19:28](#) And Jesus said to them, Truly I say to you that you who have followed Me, in the regeneration, when the Son of Man shall sit in the throne of His glory, you also shall sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

Pentecost is one of the Feasts given to Israel and it therefore foreshadowed something for that nation. The Lord gave Israel commands concerning the Feasts and this one is very relevant to this examination;

[Deu 16:16](#) Three times in a year shall all your males appear before Jehovah your God in the place which He shall choose: in the Feast of Unleavened Bread, and in the Feast of Weeks, and in the Feast of Tabernacles. And they shall not appear before Jehovah empty,

In the times of the NT, Jerusalem was swollen with pilgrims from the known world and Luke mentions these in the second chapter;

[Act 2:5](#) And dwelling at Jerusalem there were Jews, devout men out of every nation under heaven.

[Act 2:7](#) And they were all amazed and marveled, saying to one another, Behold, are not these who speak all Galileans?

[Act 2:8](#) And how do we each hear in our own dialect in which we were born?

[Act 2:9](#) Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Judea, and Cappadocia, in Pontus, and Asia,

[Act 2:10](#) Phrygia, and Pamphylia, in Egypt, and in the parts of Libya around Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes,

[Act 2:11](#) Cretans and Arabians, we hear them speaking the great things of God in our own languages.

Twice in this passage we are told that the crowd consisted of Jews (and proselytes) from twelve nations and regions who had gathered to the Feast. They are described as being devout since at great expense they had obeyed the command of God to appear before Him.

To further confirm that the crowds were Israelites and Israelites only, we list here the terms of address Peter used;
[Act 2:14](#) But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice and spoke out to them, "Men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem,
[Act 2:22](#) "Men of Israel, hear these words:
[Act 2:29](#) "Men, brothers,
[Act 2:36](#) "Therefore let all the house of Israel know

And also in chapter three;

[Act 3:12](#) So when Peter saw this, he replied to the people: "Men of Israel, why do you marvel at this?
[Act 3:25](#) You are sons of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers,

No gentile is a man of Israel or a physical brother to Peter or any part of the house of Israel or a son of the prophets or a son of any covenant God made with Israel's Fathers. If the Gentile is a proselyte then he is no longer a Gentile.

Thus far we have presented to sound Scriptural reasons why there were no Gentiles in those crowds on the Feast of Pentecost. But there is further irrefutable evidence.

In Acts chapter 10 this very same Apostle Peter had journeyed to Joppa. He was hungry and had fallen into a trance. In this trance a sheet was let down from heaven three times in which were all kinds of animals. A voice called to him to rise, kill and eat;
[Act 10:10](#) And he became very hungry and desired to eat. But while they made ready, an ecstasy fell on him.
[Act 10:11](#) And he saw the heaven opened and a certain vessel like a sheet coming down to him, being bound at the four corners and let down to the earth;
[Act 10:12](#) in which were all the four-footed animals of the earth, and the wild beasts, and the reptiles, and the birds of the heaven.
[Act 10:13](#) And a voice came to him, saying, Rise, Peter! Kill and eat!

We note the Apostle refused the voice from heaven on the grounds of faithful observance of the Law. Peter was a Law abiding Israelite;
[Act 10:14](#) But Peter said, Not so, Lord, for I have never eaten anything that is common or unclean.

Please note the words "common or unclean". What Laws would have crossed Peter's mind at the vision which made him respond with the words common or unclean? The vision of animals undoubtedly referred to the laws given to Israel regarding their diet;
[Lev 20:25](#) And you shall make a difference between clean animals and unclean, and between unclean fowls and clean. And you shall not defile your souls by beast, or by fowl, or by any kind of living thing that creeps on the ground, which I have separated from you as unclean.
[Lev 20:26](#) And you shall be holy to Me. For I, Jehovah, am holy, and have severed you from the nations, so that you should be Mine.

Israel's diet was to remind them that God had severed them from the Gentiles and Peter was about to receive an invite from a Gentile. Let the reader be assured that without this vision and voice from Heaven, Peter would have spurned the invitation with a "not so Lord". Nothing less than the Lord's own voice would change this man's mind;
[Act 10:15](#) And the voice spoke to him again the second time, What God has made clean, you do not call common.

What was it that God had made clean (John 1:29) and Peter was not to call common? The following statement by Peter to Cornelius clearly links the vision with Gentiles who up till this time were considered by Peter to be common and unclean;
[Act 10:28](#) And he said to them, You know that it is an unlawful thing for a man, a Jew to keep company with or to come near to one of another nation. But God has shown me not to call any man common or unclean.

Up until Acts 10 Peter believed it was an "unlawful" thing for an Israelite to keep company with a Gentile so there were no Gentiles at Pentecost else the Lord was many years late teaching Peter. Peter goes on to say "but God has shown me". When did God show Peter? Not at Pentecost but in the vision at Acts 10.

Peter received a threefold vision immediately prior to three men arriving with an invitation from Gentile and when the invitation was delivered Peter received yet another confirmation, this time from the Holy Spirit;
[Act 11:11](#) And behold, immediately three men stood at the house in which I was, sent from Caesarea to me.
[Act 11:12](#) And the Spirit told me to go with them, not discriminating.

The Lord told Peter that he was not to call Gentiles common or unclean since He had cleansed them. The Holy Spirit confirmed the words of the Lord by also telling Peter not to discriminate. So Peter went to Cornelius's house and then asked an incredible question;

[Act 10:29](#) Therefore I came without complaint, being sent for. I ask, then, for what reason have you sent for me.

Christian Bible student, this question of Peter's must make you think. Why ask Cornelius what he wanted if Peter had preached to Gentiles in Acts 2?

I am praying you have already asked the obvious question. Why would Peter need a threefold vision to go to a Gentile if they had already been baptized into "the church" at Acts 2?

After Cornelius explains on Peter his side of the story, Peter reveals a truth that is apparently fresh and new to him;

[Act 10:34](#) Then Peter opened his mouth and said, Truly I see that God is no respecter of persons;

[Act 10:35](#) but in every nation he who fears Him and works righteousness is accepted with Him.

"Truly I see" could be rendered "it has been demonstrated before my eyes". This would hardly be fresh and new to Peter if he had been commanded to go into the entire world and preach to all nations, or had already preached to gentiles at Acts chapter 2. What is fresh and new to us is that the vision Peter received and the word of the Holy Spirit had opened Peter's mind to the wider scope of salvation. Peter's new perception came many years after Acts chapter 2 and he is now ready to preach to a gentile.

Peter presents the facts of our Saviour's ministry, death and resurrection directing Cornelius' attention to the fact that the Prophets gave witness to forgiveness through faith in Him. Obviously Cornelius believed because as Peter was still speaking the Holy Spirit gave the gift of tongues to him. Please note the reaction of those who accompanied Peter;

[Act 10:44](#) While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell on all those hearing the Word.

[Act 10:45](#) And those of the circumcision, who believed (as many as came with Peter), were astonished because the gift of the Holy Spirit was poured out on the nations also.

[Act 10:46](#) For they heard them speak with tongues and magnify God.

I apologies for asking the obvious questions, but why would they be "astonished" (amazed, put out of wits or be beside one's self) if this was not a new and unexpected thing? Those who accompanied Peter were at Pentecost.

And as if these things are not enough, we shall make a few final points from Acts 11.

[Act 11:1](#) And the apostles and brethren who were in Judea heard that the nations had also received the Word of God.

When did the apostles and brethren hear that the Gentiles had ALSO received the Word of God? These events are many years after Acts 2. Were these apostles and brethren also confused?

Included among the brethren were the members of the circumcision group who contended with Peter;

[Act 11:2](#) And when Peter had come up to Jerusalem, those of the circumcision contended with him,

[Act 11:3](#) saying, You went in to uncircumcised men and ate with them.

Why would this group contend with Peter if Gentiles had been baptized into the "church" at Acts 2? Note, Peter was of the circumcision and all believers to this time were of the circumcision so this use of the word must refer to the Pharisaic or Judaizers within the Israeli community.

Peter then fully recounts the event and concludes with these words;

[Act 11:15](#) And as I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell on them, as on us at the beginning.

[Act 11:17](#) If God gave to them the same gift as to us, they having believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I to be able to prevent God?

If ever we wanted the final proof that there were no Gentiles at Pentecost this is it. Peter declares that Cornelius received the Holy Spirit just like the Israelites did at the beginning, which is Pentecost.

It was God who gave the Cornelius the gift so perhaps Peter would have tried to prevent God without the vision. Again, how would Peter speak like this if gentiles had already been so blessed at Acts 2?

The apostles and brethren also came to a realization:

[Act 11:18](#) When they heard these things, they were silent and glorified God, saying, Then God has also granted repentance to life to the nations.

In Acts 10 & 11 seven groups or individuals confirm to us that there were no Gentiles at Acts 2. Will we believe them or the traditions of modern "churchianity"? Here are those who lived through those days and who know nothing of any gentiles being baptized at Acts 2;

1. The Lord who had given Peter the vision concerning Gentiles.

2. The Holy Spirit who told Peter not to discriminate against them.
3. Peter himself, who would have refused to go and prevented God, if had he not been given such clear commands.
4. Those who accompanied Peter.
5. The other Apostles and brethren in Judea.
6. The Circumcision group.
7. All the brethren finally acknowledged that God had been in this.

In the mouths of two or three witnesses will a thing be established but yet, despite these plain statements from the Word, the traditions of men continue to hold sway. The dogma that the "church" started at Pentecost where Israelites and gentiles were baptized together is as far from the truth as can be imagined. Are we prepared to let the Word stand before our traditions?

Let the honest Bible student acknowledge that the ridiculous tradition claiming Israelite and Gentile were baptized into the "church" at Acts 2 is totally without Scriptural basis. Once we can step out in faith and grasp the truth of God's Word in this matter we begin an incredible journey of discovery.

When the foundations of "churchianity" are quick sand then the superstructures will be very shaky indeed. Today we see the falling away from the Word of God which our Apostle Paul so clearly spoke about.